

# **SCENIC ROUTES ELEMENT**

**RICHMOND GENERAL PLAN**

**October 1975**



# SCENIC ROUTES ELEMENT

RICHMOND GENERAL PLAN

RICHMOND, CALIFORNIA  
ADOPTED OCTOBER 14, 1975



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RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF RICHMOND ADOPTING THE  
"SCENIC ROUTES ELEMENT OF THE RICHMOND GENERAL PLAN" DATED SEPTEMBER  
1975

WHEREAS, Section 65302 of the California Government Code requires that the City of Richmond's General Plan include a scenic routes element as follows:

"(h) A scenic highway element for the development, establishment, and protection of scenic highways pursuant to the provisions of Article 2.5 (commencing with Section 260) of Chapter 2 of Division 1 of the Streets and Highways Code."

and

WHEREAS, the Richmond City Planning Department has prepared a "Scenic Routes Element of the General Plan" dated September 1975, in conformity with said Section 65302(h); and

WHEREAS, a Final Environmental Impact Report has been prepared for said element and certified by the Environmental Impact Panel and the Planning Commission and the City Council have reviewed and considered the information contained in said report; and,

WHEREAS, Section 65352 of the Government Code of the State of California requires that the Planning Commission approve, by resolution, all elements which are to become a part of the General Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission did, on September 18, 1975, by resolution, approve the document entitled "Scenic Routes Element of the Richmond General Plan required by Section 65302 of the Government Code of the State of California;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Richmond does hereby adopt the document entitled "Scenic Routes Element of the Richmond General Plan" dated September 1975, as the Scenic Routes Element of the Richmond General Plan required by Section 65302 of the Government Code of the State of California.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Council directs that the City Clerk keep on file a copy of said Element, and that the Planning Department maintain a copy of said Element for public inspection.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Council does hereby amend the Richmond General Plan by adopting said new Scenic Highways Element of the Richmond General Plan which replaces and supersedes the finding and policy statements presently contained in the Coastline Plan (Part III, Scenic Highways, of Section B: Circulation, pp. 68-71) and further amends and supersedes the General Plan by revising other inconsistent sections of the General Plan, as appropriate.

I certify that the foregoing resolution was passed and adopted by the Council of the City of Richmond at a regular meeting thereof held October 14, 1975, by the following vote:

Ayes: Councilmen Silva, Bates, Grydyk, Corcoran, Campbell and Fernandez.

Noes: None.

Absent: Councilmen Allen, Nelson and Wagerman.

*Harlan J. Heydon*  
Clerk of the City of Richmond

Approved:

*Ray Gandy*  
Mayor

Approved as to form:

*William M. Dennee*  
Deputy City Attorney

Certified as a True Copy

*Harlan J. Heydon*  
CLERK OF THE CITY OF RICHMOND, CALIF.

RESOLUTION NO. 75-1

RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF RICHMOND  
APPROVING THE "SCENIC ROUTES ELEMENT OF THE RICHMOND GENERAL PLAN"  
DATED SEPTEMBER, 1975

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WHEREAS, Section 65302 of the California Government Code requires that the City of Richmond's General Plan include a scenic routes element as follows:

"(h) A scenic highway element for the development, establishment, and protection of scenic highways pursuant to the provisions of Article 2.5 (commencing with Section 260) of Chapter 2 of Division 1 of the Streets and Highways Code.  
..."

and

WHEREAS, the Richmond City Planning Department has prepared a "Scenic Routes Element of the General Plan" dated September, 1975, in conformity with said Section 65302(h); and

WHEREAS, a Final Environmental Impact Report has been prepared for said element and certified by the Environmental Impact Panel and the Planning Commission has reviewed and considered the information contained in said report; and,

WHEREAS, Section 65352 of the Government Code of the State of California requires that the Planning Commission approve, by resolution, all elements which are to become a part of the General Plan;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Planning Commission of the City of Richmond does hereby approve the document entitled "Scenic Routes Element of the Richmond General Plan" dated September, 1975, as the Scenic Routes Element of the Richmond General Plan required by Section 65302 of the Government Code of the State of California.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Planning Commission recommends to the City Council the adoption of said document as the Scenic Routes Element of the Richmond General Plan.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Planning Commission recommends to the City Council that the Richmond General Plan be amended by adopting said new Scenic Highways Element of the Richmond General Plan which replaces and supersedes the finding and policy statements presently contained in the Coastline Plan (Part III, Scenic Highways, of Section B: Circulation, pp. 66-71) and further amends and supersedes the General Plan by revising other inconsistent sections of the General Plan, as appropriate.

- - - - -

I certify that the foregoing resolution was passed and adopted by the Planning Commission of the City of Richmond at a regular meeting thereof held September 18, 1975, by the following vote:

Ayes: Commissioners Greco, Allyn, Lobese,  
Modie, Miller and Harris

Noes: None

Abstained: Commissioner Vukelich

Absent: Commissioners Griffin and Pitts

Sam A. Pitts  
Secretary

Approved:

Donald A. Greco  
Chairman

Approved as to form:

W. M. Bonner  
Deputy City Attorney

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1. Legal Requirement

Section 65302(h) of the California Government Code requires all counties and charter cities to develop a Scenic Highways Element as part of their General Plan. The purpose of the Element is to provide a basis, on the local level, for the development of a State system of scenic highways and the formulation of measures for the protection of the natural scenic areas adjacent to and visible from scenic routes. This Scenic Routes Element, which includes designations for scenic thoroughfares and corridors within the Richmond Planning Area, is intended to fulfill this requirement.

## 2. Primary Goal of Richmond's Scenic Routes Element

The primary goal of Richmond's Scenic Routes Element is to establish measures for preserving and enhancing the right-of-way of certain routes which have been designated as "scenic" as well as the natural areas adjacent to those scenic routes in the Richmond Planning Area. Specific objectives include: (1) establish a system of scenic routes to aid in protecting certain roadways and scenic corridors; (2) conserve, enhance and protect scenic views observable from the roadway system; and (3) improve the visual appearance of the roadway system; especially major arterials and "gateways" into the City.

## 3. Relationship to Other Plan Elements

The Scenic Routes Element relates directly to the transportation/circulation, open space and conservation, and the urban design elements of the Richmond General Plan. It updates and supersedes the Scenic Highways Element in the Coastline Plan (pp. 68-71) as well as all other references in the Richmond General Plan to landscaped freeways, major thoroughfares and scenic drives.

## 4. Description of the Planning Area

The Richmond Planning Area includes the cities of Richmond, San Pablo and El Cerrito as well as certain unincorporated

County areas, including North Richmond, El Sobrante, Rollingwood, East Richmond Heights, Kensington and a portion of the Richmond Annex. The Element applies to all of the land within the Planning Area to the extent that Richmond has jurisdiction or recognized obligations to make recommendations.

## II. BACKGROUND

### 1. Elements of a Scenic Routes System

A scenic routes system is more than public roads with trees and shrubs planted beside them; it consists of the relationship of the roadway to its surroundings. For the purpose of this Element the following definitions will apply. They should aid in understanding the relationship of the scenic routes to their environs.

Scenic Routes: A scenic route is a road, street or freeway which traverses a scenic corridor of relatively high visual value or a road that serves as an important visual or functional feature. It consists of both the scenic corridor and the public right-of-way.

Public Right-of-Way: The right-of-way includes the roadbed and adjacent lands in public control, including lands utilized for roadway protection, storm drainage, public utilities, pedestrian travel, and roadside plantings. Where appropriate, the right-of-way may also include cycling or hiking trails, roadside rests, or turnouts, etc.

Scenic Corridor: The scenic corridor is the area that extends beyond the scenic route right-of-way and is of sufficient scenic quality to warrant development controls to preserve or enhance its scenic qualities. The width of the corridor will vary depending upon the terrain of the area, development adjacent to the right-of-way and the extent of natural features which are to be preserved.

Areas Extending Beyond Scenic Corridors: Views from scenic routes may extend beyond scenic corridors and comprise the remainder of the city and its environs. Therefore, certain basic general requirements for development are necessary to preserve and enhance the attractiveness of all areas. In developed areas, the primary methods include requirements insuring preservation of outstanding views; preservation of existing trees; establishment of new landscaping; and controls on the type and location of utility and communication towers, poles and lines, and outdoor advertising signs and structures. In undeveloped areas, primary methods include regulations concerning grading and removal of natural vegetation; preservation of natural streambeds; landscaping; control of location and type of utility and communication towers, poles and lines and outdoor advertising on signs and structures.

## 2. State and County Scenic Highways Program

The State Scenic Highways Program: The State scenic highways law, Section 220 to 223 and 260 to 263 inclusive of the Streets and Highways Code, sets forth the State's interest in scenic highway conservation and development. The law establishes a State scenic highway system, or master plan; creates an Advisory Committee on a master plan for scenic highways; and places responsibility for the creation and application of standards for development of the system in the State Department of Public Works and the Advisory Committee. The law further establishes the scenic highway system "...as a vital part of the all encompassing effort which the State must take to protect and enhance California's beauty, amenity, and quality of life," and recognizes that the implementation of a State scenic highway system requires the cooperative efforts of local governments.

Only highways included in the Master Plan are eligible for designation as "Official State Scenic Highway." By the nature and intent of the initial legislation, the principal effort in obtaining official designation resides with the local jurisdiction. The local jurisdiction is responsible for: (1) the preparation of a plan identifying the scenic corridor for the scenic highway route and scenic resources requiring protection; and (2) developing and implementing a program of proposed standards and measures for the protection of the scenic corridor. The State Government provides no financial resources to the local jurisdiction for the preparation of the plan or for implementation measures.

As of January 1975, the California Scenic Highway Master Plan included 6,787 miles of State highways. Only 793.7 miles of the system have been officially designated. None of the State routes traversing Richmond-Route 17, Route 80 and San Pablo Avenue (State Route 123) have been included on the Master Plan. State criteria for scenic highway designation are such that these routes probably would not be added to the Master Plan.

Contra Costa County Scenic Highways Program: Section 154 of the Streets and Highways Code encourages and authorizes counties to develop systems of county scenic highways to complement the State system.

In September 1974, Contra Costa County adopted a Scenic Routes Element which recommends that certain roadways be included in a County-wide Scenic Route System. Development and implementation of measures to preserve and enhance the



scenic qualities of designated roadways and their scenic corridors is the responsibility of respective local jurisdictions through which the roads pass. In the Richmond Planning Area, the following roads are included in the County plan.

#### Scenic Freeways and Expressways

- State Route 17 from the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge to the Alameda County line

#### Scenic Thoroughfares and Collectors

- San Pablo Dam Road east of Interstate 80
- Castro Ranch Road
- Western Drive from State Route 17 to Point San Pablo Yacht Harbor
- The Garrard-Canal Boulevard loop

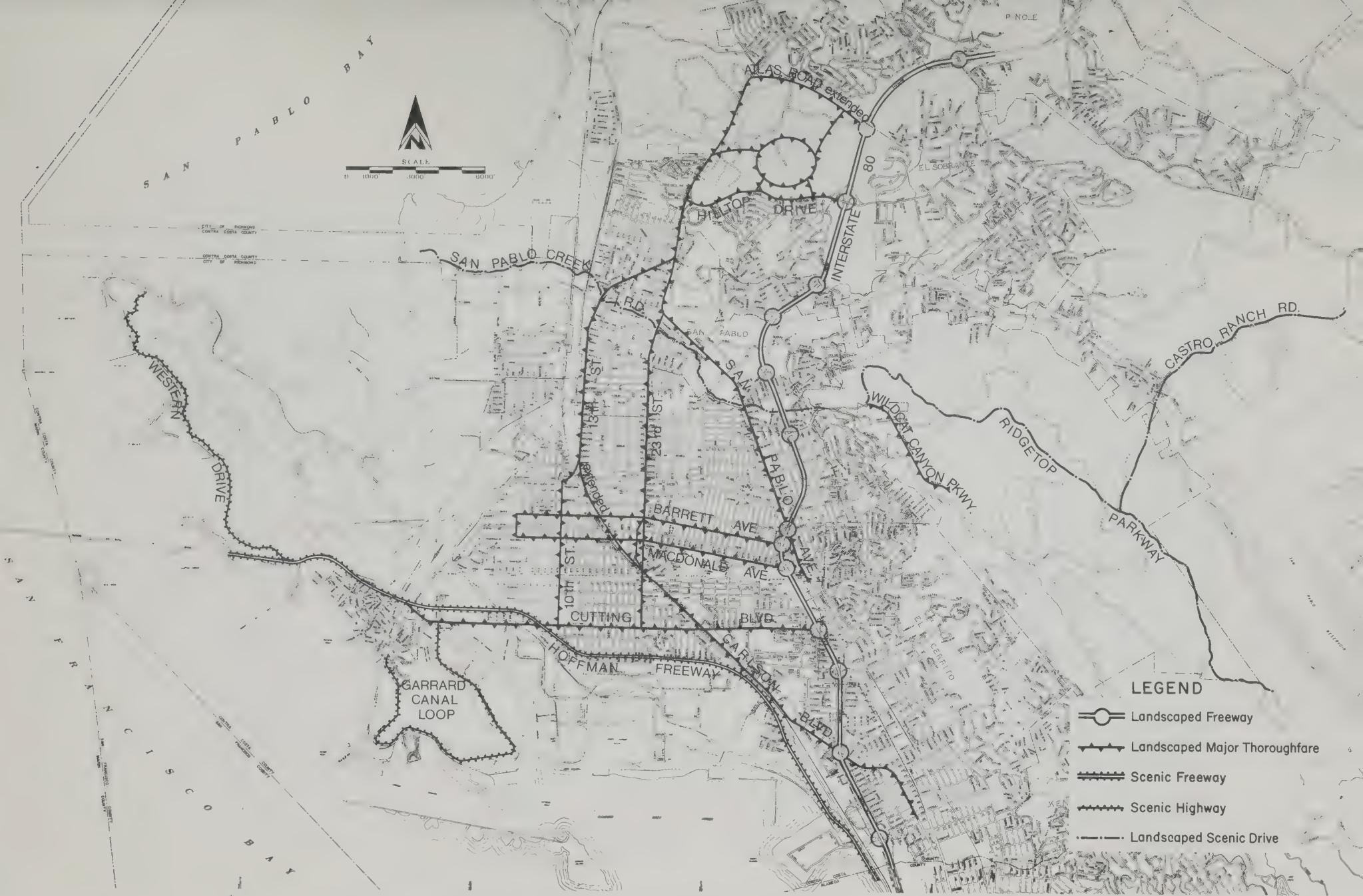
These roads are indicated on Map 1, which indicates the roads in the Richmond Planning Area which are given a scenic designation in the County Scenic Routes Plan.

#### 3. Scenic Highway Elements of Other Jurisdictions Within the Richmond Planning Area

El Cerrito and San Pablo are within the Richmond Planning Area. To date, El Cerrito has adopted a Scenic Highways Element but San Pablo has not. El Cerrito's Element identifies San Pablo Avenue as an urban scenic highway and Arlington Boulevard and Moeser Lane as local scenic routes.

#### 4. Scenic Route Designations in the Existing Richmond General Plan

The Richmond General Plan has always recognized the potential scenic value and the need to improve the visual appearance of certain streets within the Planning Area. The General Plan, adopted in 1964, designated Interstate 80 and the proposed Hoffman Freeway as landscaped freeways. Wildcat Canyon Parkway, including its extension, MacDonald and Barrett Avenues and Cutting Boulevard were identified as landscaped major thoroughfares. Castro Ranch Road, Western Drive north of the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge approach, the proposed Ridgetop Parkway in Wildcat Canyon, and the Garrard-Canal Boulevard loop were identified as landscaped scenic drives.



In amendments to the General Plan through the years, other streets were also given "scenic" designations. In 1966, 2 roads were designated as scenic drives: (1) a connection between San Pablo Creek and Wildcat Creek near 13th Street, and (2) Oursan Valley Drive from Ridgetop Parkway in Wildcat Canyon to Oursan Valley Park site north of San Pablo Reservoir (commonly referred to as an extension of Castro Ranch Road). In 1967 the major north/south routes were designated landscaped thoroughfares, specifically 10th Street, 13th Street, Carlson Boulevard and its proposed extension to Portola Avenue and 13th Street, 23rd Street, San Pablo Avenue north of MacDonald Avenue and Hilltop Drive. In 1972, the Atlas Road extension and the internal circulation roads for the Hilltop Shopping Center were designated as landscaped major thoroughfares. The last revisions to date were contained in the Coastline Plan adopted in 1973 which contained a Scenic Highways Element. In this Element, Cutting Boulevard was designated as a major landscaped thoroughfare, the proposed Hoffman Freeway was designated as a scenic freeway (this replaced the term "landscaped freeway" which had been used previously) and the Garrard-Canal Boulevard loop and Western Drive were designated as scenic highways (this replaced the term "landscaped scenic drive" used previously).

Map 2 indicates those roadways which have a scenic designation in the Richmond General Plan.

### III. RICHMOND'S SCENIC ROUTES PLAN

Due to the nature of the State Scenic Highway Program, it is unlikely that any of the State routes within the Richmond Planning Area would be added to the State system. However, even though the emphasis of the Scenic Routes Element is on the designation of State highway routes as "scenic" routes, cities are not precluded from developing and adopting local scenic routes.

Richmond's scenic routes system consists of certain designated scenic routes and scenic corridors within the Planning Area as well as policies related to the development, conservation and enhancement of these areas.

#### 1. Route and Scenic Corridor Designations

The following roadways and scenic corridors are included within the proposed scenic routes system of the Richmond General Plan. Roads indicated by an asterisk (\*) have already been designated as a scenic thoroughfare in the General Plan by an earlier City action.

##### Urban Scenic Routes

This designation includes many of the major thoroughfares throughout the Planning Area. Although they may not be "scenic" in the traditional sense of affording scenic vistas, nevertheless, these routes serve as important visual and functional features that should be enhanced and developed to their full potential. Many of the routes serve as major "gateways" into the various jurisdictions of the Planning Area and consequently their visual appearance is especially significant.

- MacDonald-Barrett Avenue couplet\*
- Cutting Boulevard\*
- 10th Street\*
- Carlson Boulevard and its proposed extension to Portola Avenue and 13th Street\*
- 22nd-23rd Street couplet\*
- San Pablo Avenue\*
- Hilltop Drive\*
- Atlas Road extension\*
- the internal circulation roads for the Hilltop Shopping Center\*
- Giant Highway

### Scenic Routes

This designation includes thoroughfares that traverse areas of scenic or recreational interest. This includes developed suburban and urban roads that have scenic qualities to them.

- Castro Ranch Road\*
- Western Drive north of the Richmond-San Rafael Approach\*
- Garrard-Canal Boulevard Loop\*
- San Pablo Dam Road
- Arlington Boulevard
- Pinole Valley Road
- Moeser Lane
- Wildcat Canyon Parkway\*

### Scenic Freeways

This designation includes freeways traversing the Planning Area. Again, these thoroughfares may not be "scenic" in the traditional sense, but they are important roadways that should be enhanced.

- Interstate 80\*
- Proposed Hoffman Freeway\*

### Scenic Corridors

This designation includes undeveloped or largely undeveloped areas of scenic quality adjacent to and visible from designated scenic thoroughfares.

- the area adjacent to the Garrard-Canal Boulevard loop
- the western portion of San Pablo Peninsula adjacent to Western Drive
- the area adjacent to San Pablo Dam Road west of Appian Road
- the area adjacent to Castro Ranch Road

These designations are indicated on Map 3.

## 2. Policies

A range of planning "tools" will be required to adequately enhance and protect the designated scenic routes and corridors. The selection of scenic thoroughfares and corridors, although important, is only a starting point. The following policies are proposed to protect and enhance the designated routes and corridors. Several of these policies have already been adopted in the Richmond Coastline Plan. These are indicated by an asterisk (\*).



## MAP 3. SCENIC ROUTES

RICHMOND SCENIC ROUTES ELEMENT 1975

- (1) Maintain scenic route rights-of-way as attractive as possible utilizing such measures as landscaping; tree planting; well-designed street furniture, traffic and other official signs; undergrounding utilities; and controlling the use of commercial signs.
- (2) Continue to encourage the State Department of Transportation's policy of landscaping existing or proposed freeways or other State restricted routes within the Planning Area.

CalTrans currently has a policy of landscaping freeways in the vicinity of developed areas where space is available for planting. The landscaping is intended as erosion control, screening of traffic from adjacent buildings, noise abatement and beautification.

- (3) Investigate the feasibility of initiating a program of "gateway" beautification for major entryways into the City of Richmond.

Entryways are of particular importance because often they determine a person's first impressions of a city. Entryways should be distinctive and as visually attractive as possible.

- \*(4) When appropriate, coordinate improvements or construction of scenic routes with adjacent recreation areas and other amenities such as vista points, rest areas and cycling, hiking and riding trails.

Viewpoints seem appropriate for several of the scenic highways: (1) along each proposed hill extension of the Garrard-Canal loop; (see policy 7) and (2) above Red Rock Marina and the Point Molate ridge spur on Western Drive.

- (5) Protect and enhance the scenic resources in the Richmond Planning Area utilizing existing City controls and programs and any added means which the City finds desirable.

Richmond already has a wide variety of controls on land development and use including zoning requirements for density, height and setback; requirements for underground utilities in new subdivisions; planned unit development

controls; anti-litter and weed abatement laws, grading regulations; building and housing codes; sign and outdoor advertising regulations; open space zoning; agricultural preserve legislation; utility undergrounding program; park dedication requirements; site plan review, and environmental review guidelines. For the most part, these controls are adequate, but may need to be further expanded or augmented in certain areas.

\*(6) Schedule completion of the Garrard-Canal Boulevard loop to be designated as a scenic route.

Construction should be done in two phases. The first phase consists of a portion of the loop extending along the level shoreline past Brickyard Cove, around Potrero Point and connecting to Canal Boulevard. The second phase would consist of two additional sections of the loop to be developed after construction of the major alignment of the loop is complete. One additional section will pass over the low saddle of the ridge which extends to Ferry Point and one will follow the approximate alignment of former County Road 27, which passes through the ARCO property above Shipyard 3.

\*(7) Eliminate billboards fronting on Hoffman Boulevard.

\*(8) Encourage a design for the Hoffman Freeway that will allow Bay views, especially on the elevated portions.

\*(9) Encourage landscaping on the 20 foot berm which is partially constructed on the eastern side of Western Drive and encourage landscaping of other quarrying sites as work on them is completed.

\*(10) Place utility lines underground along Western Drive north of the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge toll plaza.



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